



WOONSOCKET

# **AMAZON HQ2 PROPOSAL**

**CITY OF WOONSOCKET, RHODE ISLAND**

**Department of Planning & Development**  
**D i v i s i o n   o f   P l a n n i n g**

# Amazon HQ2

---

## Request for Proposal

### WOONSOCKET, RHODE ISLAND

- ✦ Woonsocket is 'the perfect fit' for AMAZON HQ2 from a historical context. This space of place on the North tip of Rhode Island comes off as the closest thing Americans have to the Silicon Valley in the 1800s and still stands out as the ultimate 'disrupter' in manufacturing and enterprise for this Civil War era.
- ✦ Tucked in Northern Rhode Island, a quintessential American city born from six mill villages in 1888 that sprung from its city centre, Main Street (the heart of the America city), Woonsocket spread its wings to infinite glory, becoming the textile giant of the nation. From the hands of countless women and men, Woonsocket carved its place in the history of the American Industrial Revolution.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- ✦ Inspired in the first campus of America, The University of Virginia, the masterpiece of our great President, Thomas Jefferson, the chosen architecture of our nation for our institutions, the Greek Revival and the architecture of the American Industrial Revolution, our project of urban design seeks to strike a delicate balance between tradition and innovation. The vernacular and erudite architecture comes together to forge a *tour de force* of light, form and meaning.
- ✦ The shapes hark back to the Roman colonial settlements – the cylinder, half circle, square, triangle and dome. These simple and powerful shapes form a dynamic and engaging composition of silence and connectivity. With the Blackstone River at the heart of the composition, the existing buildings (mills) and the proposed buildings create a balanced musicality of shapes that define negative and positive space, all equally valued, shaping place proper, where the public and the private realm intermingle to create a vibrant yet poised built environment. The exterior space invites discovery, meditation, inquisitiveness and creativity – the elements of work and productivity of our age – talent.
- ✦ Four existing mill buildings will house the first phase of Amazon HQ2 in Woonsocket, and will become part of an epic urban and architectural transformative design that will inspire and connect to the history of our nation and our great city of Woonsocket. Between tradition and innovation an architecture of modern place emerges.
- ✦ The Blackstone River, running through the middle of the site, is "unites" the site by a grand "plaza" building of silence on one side of the river, and an "amphitheatre" facing it that leads us to the waters of the river, on the other side of the river.
- ✦ The concaveness and convexes of each shape of the buildings proposed defines the

architectural wall of existing streets and property lines, respecting the public realm and abutting property owners.

- ✚ The new Amazon HQ2 is completely walkable and bikeable. All automobiles will find underground garages as they enter the property off Harris Street and Gaskill Street, Singleton Street or off Highland Street.
- ✚ The entire site is open to pedestrian circulation in complete safety; landscaped with pavers, stone dust and greening, providing porous pavements covering most of the site. Pedestrian bridges (3) link the two major portions of the campus. Off River Street, a Train Stop is placed where the commuter rail will bring passengers to Amazon HQ2.
- ✚ A "biodome" is placed between the river and River Street, affording leisure (especially in the winter months) and organic food, with an array of urban agriculture possibilities.
- ✚ Most of the buildings have been designed where the concave spaces simultaneously serve as rain water basins for watering the greened areas, as well as for sanitary uses in the rainy season, and more "intimate" public spaces.
- ✚ All curtain walls will be solar, utilizing state of the art and the latest solar technology applied to architecture. These features aim at reducing significantly the need for electrical energy from the grid, and greatly reduce the use of water from the grid as well. The use of turbines submersed in the river is also an additional option to complement the solar option proposed for the buildings.

#### **SITE INFORMATION**

- ✚ The proposed site is located in the North Western part of the city, next to Massachusetts. This site contains 50.32 acres of land, 2,7052,192.8 square feet. Three large mill buildings are located on the proposed site that total in 838,871 square feet, containing mostly empty or underutilized space that is primed for development. (Please see map below).





#### Ownership Structure of the property

Listed below are the properties within the proposed site area with the current land owners. The Woonsocket municipality owns and controls two of the properties within the proposed site, currently designated as a public park.

Property Plat 7 Lot 37 ownership the First Republic Corp of America

Property Plat 7 Lot 31 ownership Future Com. LTD

Property Plat 7 Lot 32 ownership Future Com. LTD

Property Plat 8 Lot 37 ownership Dorando Properties LLC. ( in receivership)

Property Plat 8 Lot 58 ownership Dorando Properties LLC.

Property Plat 8 Lot 5 ownership Dorando Properties LLC.

Property Plat 8 Lot 117 ownership Therrien, Eileen D.

Property Plat 8 Lot 118 ownership Conran, Christine

Property Plat 8 Lot 119 ownership Van Oudenren, Thomas

Property Plat 8 Lot 35 ownership Dorondo Properties

Property Plat 8 Lot 45 ownership A Total Concept Corp

Property plat 7 Lot 30 ownership River Street Reality Inc.

Property Plat 7 Lot 6 ownership Public Works City of Woonsocket

Property Plat 8 Lot 69 ownership Public Works City of Woonsocket

✚ Current Zoning of the Site

The proposed site area is currently zoned Industrial 1 (I-1) and Public Recreation (PR-1). Each area can be rezoned to fit the need of the Amazon Headquarters.

2.1-4.1 Industrial 1 (I-1). Light Industrial District, primarily for the conduct of manufacturing and other industrial uses which do not involve excessive smoke, odor, or noise. A minimum of six thousand (6,000) square feet is required per lot.

2.1-5.1 Public Recreation 1 (PR-1). Active Public Recreation District, for the preservation and enhancement of those areas within the city which are best suited for structured, active recreational activities, with or without accessory facilities. No minimum lot size is required.

✚ Existing utilities

The proposed site location has water, sewer, electric, storm water, internet and phone utilities that all currently service the area. Woonsocket is serviced by Cox, Verizon and Dish for internet, phone and TV services, with fiber optics provided within the city by Verizon. Cell service is provided by Verizon, AT&T, T-Mobile and Sprint with towers either located in Woonsocket or just over the Massachusetts boarder.

✚ Information on Proposed Buildings

Number of new buildings: 25

Number of Existing: 4

Total Square Footage: 7,988,975

✚ State and Local Tax Incentives

**Rhode Island General Law Title 44 Taxation Chapter 44-3**

The Tax Stabilization Incentive provides an incentive for Rhode Island municipalities to enter into tax stabilization agreements (TSA) by reimbursing municipalities up to 10% of tax revenue foregone due to the completion of a TSA that spans at least 12 years. Qualifying projects must be at least \$10 million and create 50 jobs (or at least \$5 million and 25 jobs in Hope Communities)

✚ Significant Population Center

There are two main significant population centers in northern Rhode Island. The first location is Woonsocket with a population of 41,406. The second is Providence, located about twenty minutes from the site location with a population of 179,219. Woonsocket

and the proposed location are also located an hour from Boston with a population of 673,184 and southern Massachusetts.

Rhode Island has a highly educated labor pool, due to a high number of land grant universities and private colleges within the state that draw over fifty –six percent of their students from out of state on a regional, national and global level. Rhode Island is home to more than nine large universities and one ivy league school that offer programs ranging from engineering, market, programming, graphic design, arts and business. Rhode Island is also home to the CVS and General Electric Headquarters, both of which are located in Northern Rhode Island.

#### ✦ Institutions of Higher Education

Providence: Rhode Island School of Design, Brown University, Johnson and Wales University, Providence College, Rhode Island College

Smithfield: Bryant University,

East Greenwich: New England Institute of Technology

Bristol: Roger Williams University

Newport: Salve Regina University

Kingston: University of Rhode Island

#### ✦ Logistics

Time to travel to major highways and other roadway information:

To I95- 30 min

To I295- 15 min

To-495- 20 min

Direct access to significant population centers

Providence, RI- by car 18.6 miles 27 min

Downtown Boston, MA- by car 53.0 miles 1hour and 12 min

Worcester, MA-by car 26.3 miles 33 min

##### Airports

- T.F. Green Airport, Warwick, RI- by car 27.0 miles 32 min
- Logan Airport, Boston, MA- by car 54.1 miles 1 hour 8 min

#### ✦ Transportation Options

##### **Railway**

Woonsocket is re-opening the commuter Worcester to Providence commuter rail in 2018 that will stop at the train station in downtown Woonsocket. Plans are also in place to extend the commuter rail to Boston and Southern New Hampshire. The railway runs along the properties designated for the site



proposal. The proposed site plan has a designation to construct an addition rail stop at the Amazon Headquarters. Please see map below.

#### **Bus**

Rhode Island's main form of public transportation is the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA), that provides bus services throughout the state with its central hub in Providence. Woonsocket has two main stops in downtown Woonsocket and is services on a daily basis.

#### **Bikeway/Pedestrian Path**

Woonsocket is in the process of constructing four bikeway segments, Segments 8A,8B-1,8B-2 and 8C, that will be a part of the Blackstone River Bikeway and the East Coast Green Way. These segments are connecting the Massachusetts portion of the Blackstone River Bikeway to North Smithfield, Cumberland, and down to southern Rhode Island. Segment 8C will run through the center of the proposed Headquarters sight and through downtown Woonsocket. Construction on segment 8C will start on October 26, 2017. (Please see map).

#### Recreational Opportunities



- Woonsocket has many different opportunities for daily activities and recreation within the city and a short commute to other areas of Rhode Island.
  - o Downtown Woonsocket is home to many different restaurants and shops where patrons can park in free lots and walk Main Street with large sidewalks and iconic historical architecture.

- Main Street is also home to the historic Stadium Theater, built in 1926, that has live music events, plays and other theatrical experiences on a regular basis.
- Chen's Blues, Jazz and Egg Rolls, a nationally renowned restaurant that features live music every weekend and has brought a variety of famous musicians to Woonsocket.
- There are many outdoor recreational opportunities in Woonsocket as well, with many public parks and the Blackstone River that bisects the city. The city has one of the highest amounts of green space in Rhode Island with over twenty-five public parks and Department of Environmental Management reserved open space, while still maintaining a dense urban fabric.
- The Blackstone River has both natural and historic importance to the city, powering mill buildings during the Industrial Revolution. The location of the river makes Woonsocket apart of the Blackstone Valley National Corridor, a nationally recognized area and park established in 2014. People can now bike along the river with the construction of the Blackstone Valley Bikeway, canoe or kayak on the river and also take the Explorer, a boat tour established by The Blackstone Valley Tourism Council, to travel the river and learn about its historical significance.
- Woonsocket is only twenty minutes from Providence, the state capital, where restaurants, live music, arts, and theater are very prevalent. Employees working in Woonsocket will be able to easily reach Providence by car, the RIPTA bus that's stops in Providence downtown, and by the Worcester-Providence commuter rail. Rhode Island, the ocean state, boasts some of the best beaches in New England and the East Coast. Southern Rhode Island has a thriving summer tourism economy focused around the abundant coastal attractions that bring people from around the world to see. Amazon employees will be able to experience the relaxing beaches with a short forty-five minute commute.

#### ✚ Fortune 500 Headquarters Experience

##### **CVS Headquarters**

CVS, ranked seventh on the Fortune 500 company list with \$ 177 Billion in annual revenue, has its headquarters in Woonsocket, Rhode Island. The company finished building the campus and moved to the city in 1988. The headquarters has around 4,000 full time employees, the executive team and the board of directors that work on the campus.

Prepared by: Rui Almeida (City Planner/Deputy Director of Planning), Jarret Katz (Principal Planner)